

SYLLABUS
POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY (SOC 333)
POWER, CULTURE AND CHANGE
THE ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
FALL 2019

Freedom and democracy are only possible where the resolute will of a nation to not allow itself to be ruled like sheep is permanently alive – Max Weber, 1906

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COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course examines the nature of political power, the cultural dimension of politics, and the dynamics of political change. Special attention is given to the ways political power intersects with other social institutions like class, gender and race. A primary goal for the course is to equip students with the analytical tools necessary for a lifetime of active and engaged Citizenship.

People often think politics relates only to elections, government, or squabbling between political parties. Sociologists however have a broader understanding of what counts as political, recognizing a wide range of power relationships in society and the *social* forces impacting the way power is exercised in our society. From this sociological perspective we begin to see how *everything* we do - and don't do - is connected to politics! It is my goal that by the end of the semester, you will have a better understanding of how political dynamics are woven into nearly every aspect of social life, from what we eat, where we live, what we learn in school, even our health.

Power is at the heart of a sociological analysis of politics and will be a major theme of the course. Throughout this semester we will engage in critical analysis of the institutional mechanisms and social processes through which political power is constructed, distributed, and maintained. Some of the questions we will wrestle with are: Who has power and how do they use it? How do liberals and conservatives think? Are democracy and capitalism compatible? Why are many people disengaged from the arena of politics, and whose interests are served by this? How can gender or race or economic inequality be “political”? And how do those without power make a difference?

ACCOMMODATIONS

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.

REQUIRED READINGS:

There will be five required books in this class – available at the ISU Bookstore (or at various online retailers). There will also be supplemental readings posted in on ReggieNet [RN]. In addition, students are expected to read a daily newspaper (*The New York Times*, *Washington Post* or *Wall Street Journal*).

- Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New Press. ISBN 978-1-59558-643-8
- Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press. ISBN 978-0-25-200985-3
- Hacker, Jacob S. and Paul Pierson. 2017. *American Amnesia: How the War on Government Led Us to Forget What Made America Proper*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2016. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. Hochschild, Arlie. *Strangers in Their Own Land*. New York. New Press.
- Lakoff, George. 2016. *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 3rd ed. ISBN 978-0226411293

GRADES

Course grades will be based on five short papers (“briefs”), three exams, attendance and participation.

Briefs (40%)

You will be required to write five two-page briefs, for each of the assigned books. Briefs are two page summaries of the central arguments the author makes. They will be due at the beginning of class – completed briefs will be your ticket to join the class. **Late Briefs will not be accepted.**

Exams (45%)

There will be two midterms and a final examination. Each exam will cover current events, assigned readings and content covered in class. The date of our Final Exam will be announced in October.

Attendance and Participation (15%)

Your attendance – and *active* participation – in class is required. Students are allowed one (1) absence for the semester, but each absence after that will negatively impact your grade. **Missing more than four classes will result in receiving a failing grade for the course.** Your participation in class discussions will be assessed based on the *quality* of your contributions. If you are uncomfortable speaking publicly you should meet with me right away. Remember, *quantity* is not the same as *quality* when it comes to participation. Quality will be rewarded.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Research shows that using personal electronic devices in the classroom negatively affects students’ attention, retention and learning. Therefore, unless given permission by the instructor, **all electronic devices are prohibited in this class.** This includes cell phones, laptop computers, tablet and handheld computers, digital audio and video players and recording devices. All such devices must be turned off or be completely silenced and **remain out of sight during class time.**

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Below is a topical outline and tentative timeline that identifies the themes and primary reading for each week. I will announce any changes in class and via ReggieNet.

Monday		Wednesday
Unit I: Power		
Week 1 Aug. 19,21	Introductions “How to Read a Book” [RN]	Clemens - “Power and Politics” pp. 5-25 [RN] Lecture: U.S. Politics and the Sociology of Power
Week 2 August 26,28	Derschewitz “Neo-Liberal Arts” [RN] Discuss Video: “Food Inc.” [Kanopy]	Current events Discussion
Week 3 Sept. 2, 4	Labor Day – No Class In the Coal [Kanopy] Harlan County USA [Kanopy] Optional: “Matewan”, “Made in L.A.”	John Gaventa – <i>Power and Powerlessness</i> Briefs Due
Week 4 Sept. 9, 11	Piven and Cloward – “Rule Making and Rule Breaking” (RN)	Foucault – Excerpt from <i>Discipline and Punish</i> [RN]
Week 5 Sept. 16,18	Michelle Alexander <i>The New Jim Crow</i> Briefs Due	Michelle Alexander <i>The New Jim Crow</i> (Cont.) Discuss Current Events (Time permitting)
Unit II: Ideology and Consciousness		
Week 6 Sept. 23,25	Midterm Exam #1	Lecture: Ideology and the political Spectrum Neuman – excerpt <i>Ideology</i> (RN)
Week 7 Sept. 30 Oct. 2	Matthew Stewart – “New Aristocracy” [RN]	Current events discussion
Week 8 Oct. 7, 9	George Lakoff – <i>Moral Politics</i> Briefs Due	George Lakoff – <i>Moral Politics</i> (cont.) Discuss Current Events (Time permitting)
Week 9 Oct. 14,16	Kollmeyer – “Consensual Domination” [RN]	Current Events Discussion
Week10 Oct. 21, 23	Hochschild – <i>Strangers in Their Own Land</i> Briefs Due	Hochschild – <i>Strangers in Their Own Land</i> (Cont.) Discuss Current Events (Time permitting)
Unit III: The Political Economy		
Week 11 Oct. 28, 30	Midterm Exam #2	Lecture: Intro to Political Economy Hacker and Pierson <i>Winner Take All Politics</i> [RN] Video: David Harvey (11min)
Week 12 Nov. 4, 6	Marx and Engels "The Communist Manifesto" parts 1,2 and 4 (pp. 8-31;43-4)	Current Events Discussion
Week 13 Nov. 11,13	Fredrick Hayek – <i>Road to Serfdom</i> [RN] Freidman – <i>Capitalism and Freedom</i> [RN]	Robert Reich - <i>Super Capitalism (Excerpt)</i> [RN] Polanyi – <i>The Great Transformation</i> [RN]
Week 14 Nov. 18, 20	Hacker and Pierson - <i>American Amnesia</i> Briefs Due	Hacker and Pierson - <i>American Amnesia</i> (Cont.) Discuss Current Events (Time permitting)
Week 15 Dec. 2,4	Current Events Discussion	Onward! Course wrap-up and review